

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1.(Currently Amended) An electronic content proving method using a computer system or a computer network comprising the steps of:

(a) a proof service provider transmitting a certificate generation request to a witness or a certificate generator;

(b) said witness or said certificate generator obtaining electronic content upon the receipt of said certificate generation request from said service provider; and

(c) generating a certificate, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for [[said]] a proof;

verifying a user's identity by referring to a usage history to determine said user as an authenticated user;

verifying that a certificate has been prepared by said witness;

requesting preparation of a certificate by said witness;

determining whether said witness has accepted said witness process;

synchronizing clocks of said proof service provider with said witness; and

accepting said certificate from said witness.

Claim 2.(Original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, wherein said certificate includes said electronic content, or data that uniquely represent said electronic content.

Claim 3.(Original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of

(d) accumulating said certificate in said service provider or transmitting said certificate to a user.

Claim 4.(Cancelled)

Claim 5.(Currently Amended) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, wherein said step of generating said certificate includes a step of providing a signature for said certificate; and wherein said ~~signature step~~ step of providing a signature includes a first configuration process consisting of a first signature step by said witness or said certificate generator and a second signature step by said service provider, or a second configuration process consisting of a signature step by a notary service provider.

Claim 6.(Original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 5, wherein said signature is encrypted using a public key encryption method to prevent alteration by a person other than a signer.

Claim 7.(Original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 2, wherein said data that uniquely represents said electronic content is a hash code.

Claim 8.(Original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, wherein in accordance with a request from said user, said certificate generation request is transmitted to said witness or to said certificate generator on one or multiple dates, or is transmitted continuously during one or multiple specific periods.

Claim 9.(Original) The electronic content proving method according to claim 1, wherein synchronization of time is effected between said service provider and said witness or said certificate generator.

Claim 10.(Currently Amended) A proving system for a service provider that proves oneness for perusal and non-alteration of an electronic content using a computer system or a computer network comprising:

means for transmitting a certificate generation request to a witness or a certificate generator;

means for obtaining electronic content upon the receipt of said certificate generation request from said service provider; and

means for generating a certificate, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for [[said]] a proof;

means for verifying a user's identity by referring to a usage history to determine said user as an authenticated user;

means for verifying that a certificate has been prepared by said witness;

means for requesting preparation of a certificate by said witness;

means for determining whether said witness has accepted said witness process;

means for synchronizing clocks of said proof service provider with said witness; and
accepting said certificate from said witness.

Claim 11.(Original) The proving system according to claim 10, wherein said certificate includes said electronic content, or data that uniquely represent said electronic content.

Claim 12.(Original) The proving system according to claim 10, further comprising means for accumulating said certificate in a computer system of said service provider or means for transmitting said certificate to a user.

Claim 13.(Cancelled)

Claim 14.(Currently Amended) The proving system according to claim 10, wherein said means for generating said certificate includes means for providing a signature for said certificate; wherein said ~~signature means~~ means for providing a signature includes a first configuration consisting of first signature means by said witness or said certificate generator and second signature means by said service provider, or a second configuration consisting of signature means by a notary service provider.

Claim 15.(Original) The proving system according to claim 14, wherein encryption means using a public key encryption method is employed for said signature means to prevent alteration by a person other than a signer.

Claim 16.(Currently Amended) A proving system for a service provider that proves openness for perusal or non-alteration of an electronic content using a computer system or a computer network, comprising:

means for accepting and for analyzing a service request received from a user;

means for selecting a witness or a certificate generator from a registered member group in which witnesses or certificate generators are registered;

means for transmitting a certificate generation request to said witness or said certificate generator that is selected;

means for accepting a certificate from said witness or from said certificate generator; and

means for transmitting said certificate to said user, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for [[said]] a proof;

means for verifying a user's identity by referring to a usage history to determine said user as an authenticated user;

means for verifying that a certificate has been prepared by said witness;

means for requesting preparation of a certificate by said witness;

means for determining whether said witness has accepted said witness process;

means for synchronizing clocks of said proof service provider with said witness; and
accepting said certificate from said witness.

Claim 17.(Original) The proving system according to-claim 16, wherein said means for accepting said certificate includes means for providing an electronic signature for said certificate.

Claim 18.(Currently Amended) A system for a witness or a certificate generator that proves openness for perusal or non-alteration of an electronic content using a computer system or a computer network, comprising:

means for accepting a certificate generation request from a user;

means for accessing an address of an electronic content included in said certificate generation request, and obtaining said electronic content;

means for generating a certificate including said electronic content, or code that uniquely represents said electronic content; and

means for transmitting said certificate to said service provider, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for [[said]] a proof;

means for verifying a user's identity by referring to a usage history to determine said user as an authenticated user;

means for verifying that a certificate has been prepared by said witness;

means for requesting preparation of a certificate by said witness;

means for determining whether said witness has accepted said witness process;

means for synchronizing clocks of said proof service provider with said witness; and
accepting said certificate from said witness.

Claim 19.(Original) The system according to claim 18, wherein said means
9 for generating said certificate includes means for providing an electronic signature for said certificate.

Claim 20.(Currently Amended) A computer readable storage medium for storing a program code that proves openness for perusal and non-alteration of an electronic content using a computer system or a computer network, said program code comprising:

a program code for, in accordance with a service request from a user or a self service request, transmitting a certificate generation request to a witness or a certificate generator;

a program code for obtaining electronic content upon the receipt of said certificate generation request from said service provider;

a program code for generating a certificate that includes said electronic content, or data that uniquely represent said electronic content; and

either a program code for accumulating said certificate in a computer system of said service provider or a program code for transmitting said certificate to a user, wherein said certificate includes address information for said electronic content and time information for [[said]] a proof;

a program code for verifying a user's identity by referring to a usage history to determine said user as an authenticated user;

a program code for verifying that a certificate has been prepared by said witness;

a program code for requesting preparation of a certificate by said witness;

a program code for determining whether said witness has accepted said witness process;

a program code for synchronizing clocks of said proof service provider with said witness;

and

a program code for accepting said certificate from said witness.

Claim 21.(Currently Amended) An article of manufacture comprising a computer ~~usable~~ readable storage medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing an electronic content proving method, the computer readable program code means in said article of manufacture comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the steps of claim 1.

Claim 22.(Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising a computer ~~usable~~ readable storage medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing a proving system, the computer readable program code means in said computer program product comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the system of claim 10.

Claim 23.(Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising a computer ~~usable~~ readable storage medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing a proving system, the computer readable program code means in said computer program product comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the system of claim 16.

Claim 24.(Currently Amended) A computer program product comprising a computer ~~usable~~ readable storage medium having computer readable program code means embodied therein for causing proof of openness for perusal or non-alteration of an electronic content, the computer readable program code means in said computer program product comprising computer readable program code means for causing a computer to effect the system of claim 18.